

The Sermon on the Mount – Part 4

Brynmawr Family Church Sermon
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 27th March 2011

Intro-

- We've been looking at the Sermon on the Mount, one of the most well known teachings of Jesus.
- We've looked at the characteristics of those who go to heaven- the essential ingredients of humility and seeking God's righteousness rather than our own.
- We've noted that the most holy people of Jesus' day, the Pharisees, were not even righteous enough to enter heaven by their own deeds- a higher righteousness was needed- that which comes by faith in Christ.
- We've seen Jesus reveal the errors in the Pharisaic interpretation of the law.
- We've also seen Jesus giving 3 examples of how the practise of the Pharisees fell short in that it was done for other people to see.
- This week we will see how Jesus again shows the righteousness of the Pharisees to be left wanting. This time He will expose their love of money rather than love of God. Amongst other things, we will be finding out what Jesus meant when He said 'The eye is the lamp of the body'.

Read Matthew 6:19-34

Treasures on earth are temporary- v19-20

- What is your attitude towards possessions? Lk 16:14 it specifically says that the Pharisees were 'lovers of money'. They thought that spirituality was evidenced by riches. People today can still sometimes equate God's blessings purely in terms of finance and materialistic possessions.

Oh Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz ?
My friends all drive Porsches, I must make amends.
Worked hard all my lifetime, no help from my friends,
So Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz ? (Janice Joplin)

This can lead to a simplistic view that if we are rich then God has blessed us, and if we are poor then He hasn't. Whilst riches and possessions are indeed a blessing now, the time will come when this world passes away, and our heavenly riches will depend on how we have used what God has given us on earth.

- Jesus vividly describes the temporary nature of possessions by using the examples of the moth, rust and theft:

Moths. Music videos these days of rap artists in their designer bling and fashions. Pressure on youth to wear labels. Moth invasion in our house- hard to get rid of. Camel throw eaten through. Clothing eaten. Won't always have clothes- naked came into the world and naked will depart (Job). One day the moth of death will totally consume all our clothing.

Rust. Old cars. Rust buckets if don't treat rust soon enough. Gradually replace the rust with filler. Gradually replace a metal car with one made from filler. Soon every car will be melted down when we account to God.

Theft. Bass guitar speaker stolen from my car on a Sunday afternoon from outside nurses home. Should have made it more secure. People go to great lengths to make sure their possessions and money is secure, but one day the thief in the night will come to snatch us from this life

- Law of Atrophy- pretty depressing. Can't take it with you. All gonna be burnt up in the fire.
- Antidote: put your treasure somewhere more secure- in Heaven! Lk 12:33 'Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the Heavens that does not fail' Generosity equates to treasure in Heaven. Although the Pharisees appeared to be do-gooders because they made a

song and a dance about their giving to the poor, in reality they were tight fisted and feathering their own nests.

- How about us? Are we trapped in a cycle of trying to keep up with the Joneses? Are we content with what we have, or always trying to better ourselves? How are our bank accounts in Heaven presently doing?

Your heart is revealed by where you put your treasure- v21

- Jesus says 'Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also'. Jesus had said earlier in the sermon on the mount in Matt 5:13-14 that the people of God are the salt of the Earth and the light of the world. This means that in a local community, the local Church is the salt and light in that whole community. Do we believe Jesus? If we believe Jesus it will be evidenced by where we place our treasure. Willow Creek 'The local Church is the Hope of the World'.
- Put in a simple way, what you feel the most strongly about you will spend your money on. 'Home is where the heart is', 'the heart is where the treasure goes'.
- Believe in the vision of BFC? Sow into it. Aim is to spread the load, so that we are all giving sacrificially. Some may not be able to give financially due to a non-Christian spouse, but could give in other ways. This year vision is a faith step and God will do great things, but we must play our part. As James says, faith is evidenced by works- literally 'putting our money where our mouth is'.
- How you can give- regular standing order- easiest. Claim tax back.
- What to give- some give a tithe. This means setting aside 10% of your income to give to God. Takes faith, but is a biblical principal. It was commanded in the Old Testament so that out of the 12 tribes of Israel, the Levites (who were full-time for God) could earn their living from serving God and the people. Although it is not commanded in the New Testament, the principle still holds true that people who are full-time serving in the Church need an income. If 10 families tithe 1 family can be fully supported to work in the Church without having to have an outside income. This is a model for Church growth. As we grow we will employ more people, and then plant out. If we are serious about wanting the Church to grow, we need to be willing to play our part financially.
- We are under grace, not law and give according to our understanding of, and in response to God's grace to us. The fact is God does not need our money, or force anyone to give, but has chosen to allow us to take part in this grace of giving. In Acts 2 the early Church was characterised by spontaneous generosity. The New Testament principle is simply this- generosity according to our appreciation of Christ's gift to us. Read 2Cor 8:1-9; 6-7; 1Cor 16:1-2 -this concerns a gift for the poor saints in Jerusalem who were going through a tough time- Paul taught that we give in response to God's grace to us, setting aside regularly the amount at the start of the week that God has put on our hearts, and to give cheerfully, not begrudgingly.

The true state of the heart is shown by how generous a person is in life- v22-23

- The Pharisees we know were really good at tithing. In fact, they were so good that they even would divide up the tiny herbs that grew in their gardens and give 10% to God. However, they would give no more than they were obliged to, and highly valued their possessions, seeing them as a reward for their righteous acts. They probably considered God lucky to have their 10%. They had a legalistic, tight fisted attitude to life and to those around them, except where they could give in order to be seen to be righteous.
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Summary

- Treasures on earth are temporary
- Your heart is revealed by where you put your treasure
- The true state of the heart is shown by how generous a person is in life
- God must come before money
- God will provide

Song: I will offer up my life